



# **Science, Religion and Spirituality**

## **World Religions**

# Science, Religion and Spirituality

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## World's religions

- Primal, Tribal  
- Hundreds of Thousands Years ago
- Eastern – Sanatana Dharma- a way of life – Vedic Religion -  
Hundreds of Thousands Years ago
- Eastern – Confucianism, Taoism (3,000 yrs ago)
- Western & Middle Eastern: Christianity (2,000 yrs ago),  
Judaism (2,500 years), Islam (1,400 years)
- Eastern – Hindu Religion (oldest – tens of thousands years) ,  
Buddhism (2,500 yrs) , Jainism(2,000+yrs )

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## Definitions (continued...)

- different religions define their goals, beliefs and faiths differently (that is why we have different religions)
- Major religions splitting into groups or factions within the religion
- Christianity – Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox, Protestantism
- Buddhism – Theravada, Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Zen Buddhism
- Islam – Sunni, Shiite, Sufism (mysticism)

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## World's religions

- Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindu

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## Buddhism – 563 to 483 B. C.

- The Four Noble Truths
- After his enlightenment, Buddha went to Benares but at Sarnath (few miles away) he preached his first Sermon with 4 truths:
- First - *Life is Dukkha*
- Second – *Cause of Dukkha is Tanha* (Desire for ‘Private Fulfillment’)
- Third – What is the Cure? – *overcome Tanha*
- Fourth – How to cure: “*The Eightfold Path*”

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## Buddhism – The Eightfold Path

### Prelim step – Right Association

- 1. Right Knowledge 2. Right aspiration
- 3. Right Speech 4. Right Behavior (do not kill, do not steal, do not lie, do not unchaste, do not take drugs or drink intoxicants)
- 5. Right Livelihood 6. Right Effort
- 7. Right mindfulness 8. Right absorption
- Life's goal: 'Nirvana' ('to blow out', 'extinguish')

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## Buddhism

- No written records left behind
- Split into 'Theravada' and 'Mahayana'
- Each splits and more splits (Hinayana, Vajrayana)
- China - Tao version called Ch'an (Zen in Japanese) & Buddhism in Tibet
- Very few practitioners in Land of Origin (India) but good following in China & Japan

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## **Buddhism** – Thoughts – Close similarity to SD?

- Prelim step: Right association– Satsang of SD?
- Eight steps – Patanjali’s Ashtanga Yoga?
- Tanha – desire for ‘private fulfillment’, ‘ego’ etc. – similar to Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha ...
- ‘Nirvana’ & ‘Moksha’
- No text on Buddha’s answer to what happens to one after ‘Nirvana’? Jivanmuktha of SD? Or, ...?
- Buddhism is fading in land of Buddha. Popular in China, Japan, ...



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## **Jainism (5 Century B. C. – India)**

- Nataputta Vardhamana (“Mahavira”)
  - Texts: Jain Agamas and Siddhantas
  - Great reverence for all forms of life
  - Strict vegetarianism, Asceticism
  - Non-violence (even in self-defence)
  - Two sects – ‘Digambara’ (sky-clad) – saints should own nothing (wear only loin-cloth)
  - ‘Svetambara’ – differs with ‘Digambara’
  - About 6 Million followers (Mumbai & Gujarat)
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## Confucianism – China – 551 to 479 B. C.

- Traditional Ways to hold society together: Brute Force & Love, Compassion
- Confucius – Deliberate Tradition – 5 steps
- 1. Jen: Goodness, benevolence, love, ..
- 2. chun tzu: Mature person
- 3. li: propriety & right thing to do changed to ‘rite’
  - Under ‘propriety’, detailed points on five things were given

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## Confucianism - China

- 4. te: power of moral example
- 5. wen: art of peace
- These five points do not provide the ‘essence’ of Confucianism at all. Under each of the above points goes a well set of reasoned examples and how people should conduct themselves. Essentially, the goal is to transform people into making people more human, rulers meritorious & of moral character, to make the state reach its highest culture – Confucius believed this is how country and its peoples become great!

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## Taoism (pronounced as Dowism)

- Originated with a man 'Lao Tze' (604 B. C)
- Confucius likened him to a dragon  
-enigmatic, larger than life, mysterious
- Lao Tze wrote "*Tao Te Ching*" (The way and its Power)
- First sense: Everything revolves around concept of *Tao*  
- *Tao is the way of ultimate reality*  
(cannot be perceived – too vast to fathom)  
(is the ground of everything that follows)  
(above all, behind all, beneath all, is th womb from which  
all life springs and into which returns)  
*See similarities to Para Brahman!!!!!!*

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## Taoism (continued ...)

- Second sense: Though Tao is ultimately transcendent, it is also *immanent. Thus, it is the way of the universe, the driving power in all nature.*
  - *basically spirit rather than matter.*
  - *it cannot be exhausted: the more it is drawn upon, the more it flows.*

*(similarity to “purnasya purnamadaya ...”)*

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## Taoism (continued ...)

- Third sense: Tao refers to the way of human life when it meshes with Tao of the universe (First sense).  
Do we see 'advaita, ...'?
- Similar to the three sense of the *Way*, three sense of the Power has yielded 3 divisions of Tao – the Philosophical Taoism, The Religious Taoism, heterogeneous Taoism.

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## Taoism and Confucianism

- These represent two distinct poles of Chinese character, Confucius the Classical and Lao Tze the romantic

- Confucianism  
calculated behavior  
human side

Taoism  
spontaneous & natural  
connect human with Tao

These religions/thoughts speak to the “me” in the reader. Tao is within us!!!!

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## ISLAM – Prophet Muhammed A. D. 622

- Derived from ‘salam’ (primary meaning ‘peace’, secondary meaning “surrender” – peace coming from surrender)
- Qu’ran or Koran –means ‘recitation’
- Muslims believe Koran is the original word from ‘The God’, the only God.
- Muslims believe that the Old and New testament erred in areas where they differ from Koran.
- Words to meditate upon, appreciate divine glory.



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## ISLAM

- Basic theological concepts of Islam are identical with those of Judaism and Christianity
- God – immaterial and invisible
- Monotheism – No one but Allah, ‘The God’
- Muslims believe that Hinduism has multiple Gods, Judaism is monotheistic but restricted to people of Israel only, Christians lost by deifying Christ.

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## ISLAM

- God has awe-inspiring power
- Good and evil matter, choices have consequences
- Allah created world; world is real.
- Allah alone is perfect, so matter is good.
- Respect for material side of life (Christianity & Judaism also do)
- Foremost among God's creation is human being

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## ISLAM

- People forget their divine origin
- Life acknowledged as gift from God
- Life's two obligations:
  - First, gratitude for life received
  - Second, surrender
    - to be a slave to Allah is to be freed from other form of slavery like greed, anxiety or ambition
- Human soul is 'free', pre-destination is also mentioned at many places in Koran

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## ISLAM

- Day of Judgment
- Based on how life is lived, the soul will either go to heaven or the hell
- Muslims believe that each soul will be held accountable for its actions on earth, future depends on how well it has observed God's commands.
- Verses in Koran say 'souls judge themselves' (to spare Allah role of punisher)

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## ISLAM

- This forces one to see how one acted in one's life
- In that sense, what death does is remove one's 'self-serving defenses', forcing one to see in total objectivity!
- The chance to return to life for even a single day to make good use of opportunities to obey God's command! (Koran details vividly images of 'hell')

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## ISLAM

- Words like ‘peace’, ‘surrender’ similar to SD, is not?
- ‘free will’ & ‘pre-destination’ - similarity with SD?
- Their claim of ‘monotheism’ similar to SD view of ‘*ekam sad, viprah bahudha vadanthi*’, though state that Hinduism is not mono-theistic! (error)
- No soul, day of judgment, good go to heaven, evil-doers go to hell – all these similar to Christianity & Judaism, differs from SD

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## ISLAM

- Sunnis & Shiites  
(disagreement over who is Muhammed's successor)
- Sufism
  - mysticism
  - did not like the Sunnis and Shiites living lavishly, so they used wooden clothing ('suf' means wood)
  - Love the pitcher less and the water more!!!

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## Judaism

- Truths were revealed to them – divine disclosure
- Recorded Yahweh's disclosures in a book, the Torah, and commentaries on it
- Exodus – escape from the Pharaoh – Jews see God's initiative at work!
- Prompted Abraham to leave his home in Ur and proceed to Canaan! Yahweh guided them all!
- Judaism is the faith of a people.



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## Judaism

- Meaning in God
- Supreme Being – Whatever a people's philosophy, it must take account of the Other.
- Because, no human being is self-created;
- Because, at some point or other, one's power is limited.
- Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one (monotheism)

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## Judaism (continued ....)

- Four ethical precepts of the “Ten Commandments”:
  - Thou shall not murder
  - Thou shall not commit adultery
  - Thou shall not steal
  - Thou shall not bear false witness

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## Christianity

- Jesus of Nazareth – born around 4 B. C.
- In his early thirties, as a teacher-healer, hostility of some of his peoples & Romans which resulted in his crucifixion.
- Few details what happened after crucifixion – some see him, some stating he didn't possess his former body – resurrection is not re-appearance. Christ!

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## Christianity

- Catholics – Seven sacraments – Two of them, Confession (following transgressions) & Mass – a literal transfusion of energy from God to the human Soul
- Eastern Orthodoxy (1054 A.D) – God’s truth discovered thru ‘Christian consensus’
- Protestantism (16<sup>th</sup> century)

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## Christianity – Catholicism – Confession

- Catholic Teaching follower confesses sins to his/her priest
- Compare & Contrast:
  - o “Vedic practices” by Brahmins (males)  
“*suryascha ma manyuscha .....*”  
“*kamokarsheeth manyurakarsheeth ...*”

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## Christianity

- Is salvation possible outside of Christ?
- Liberals think Yes
- Conservatives say No
- In between views held by many
- Ten Commandments, compassion, love ..
- Mention of spirit but nowhere near the level of spirituality seen in SD

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## Ten Commandments

### ■ God

1. Do not worship any other Gods
2. Do not make any other idols
3. Do not misuse name of God
4. Keep the Sabbath holy

### Man

5. Honor your father and mother
6. Do not murder
7. Do not commit adultery
8. Do not steal
9. Do not lie
10. Do not covet

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## Hindu Religion

- SD is not HR as the West (and most in the East) seem to believe.
- HR can be said to be a sub-set of SD.
- It can also be said that HR suffers from the ‘negatives’ associated with all ‘organized forms of religion’!
- Whereas SD does not!



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## Hindu Religion

- What is HR then?
- HR is a conglomeration of various practices falling under the B & K paths of SD
- “*Ekam Sad, Viprah Bahuda Vadanthy*” (I am One, men call me by various names). Different avatars and representations of the Supreme
- Nature, Sun, Wind, Fire, Ecology, Earth, respect to beings, ahimsa, deva-rishi-pitru runas
- Bhakthi, worship at home or temples, mantra
- Karma – Rituals, havans

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## Hindu Religion

- Varna dharma practiced and enforced
- Brahmin – Priestly, Kshatriya – Warrior, Vaisya – Trade & Agriculture, Sudra – Cleaning & menial work
- Caste system further divided with sub-castes.
- Today: questioning such caste systems!

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## Comparative Review – World Religions

- Christianity – 2,000 years, Islam – 1,400 years, Judaism about 2,000 yrs, Confucianism – 2,500 yrs, Buddhism – 2,500 years, ...Day of Judgment, Salvation, Heaven, Hell
- SD tens of thousands of years old – way of life – re-incarnation – Moksha as goal – Vast literature - unsurpassed in breadth & depth & metaphysics – SD ideas and ideals can be seen in some form or other in many other religions!